



Ironwood Tree Experience

Youth. Nature. Community.

Our Mission: To create healthy and resilient communities, Ironwood Tree Experience makes it possible for young people to engage with the natural world and be stewards of the environment.

WorldWildWeb

2020 Accomplishments



ITE goes virtual 7.2020

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic and economic shutdown in March 2020, Ironwood Tree Experience staff collaborated with donors, partners, youth participants, and our community to plan a path forward in uncertain times.

To ensure the health and safety of all and to stay true to our mission, ITE staff created a way to keep youth engaged with ITE programs and internships, the natural world, and each other. Sticking together, yet at a safe social distance, the WorldWildWeb was launched in May 2020.

The ITE WorldWildWeb is a worldwide digital connection of friends who seek, discover, and share the natural and cultural wonders of their home, neighborhood, and community!

A diverse series of projects and internships engaged ITE teens in active exploration of nature and community. Teens interfaced with other ITE youth, staff, and local and global partners and experts to learn more about projects and build a professional network of friends who live near and afar.

This report highlights our 2020 accomplishments. Enjoy!

Youth Engagement

WorldWildWeb projects provided the framework for youth to explore and engage with the natural world on their own or with their families in outdoor areas accessible to them.

Throughout the summer, there were three-week-long **sessions** containing two projects that youth could choose to participate in. Each project had a theme with 2 or 3 activities to complete, and youth were able to access the activity descriptions and post their findings (pictures, text, video, audio, etc.) via the online, collaborative platform, **Trello**. Youth also had the opportunity to learn about the projects, have discussions with ITE staff and each other, and engage with **ITE Partners and Community Experts** via multiple **Zoom** sessions. At the end of each session, youth would come together for a **final, virtual share-out** to display their discoveries and share with one another.

Nature Connections & Adventures

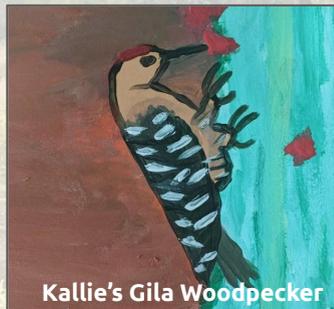
Session 1: May 4th - May 22nd

Project 1: Backyard Birds

Get to Know Your *Neighbirds*

Project 2: Homefront

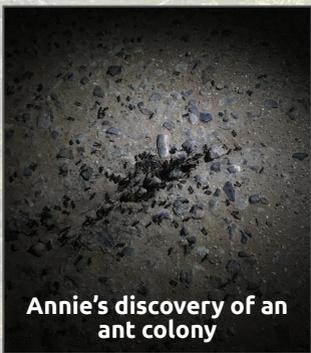
Sharing Experiences and Stories from Our Homes



Kallie's Gila Woodpecker



An asset in Clarissa's neighborhood



Annie's discovery of an ant colony



Dot's discovery of Texas Sage

Session 2: May 26th - June 12th

Project 1: Night Watch

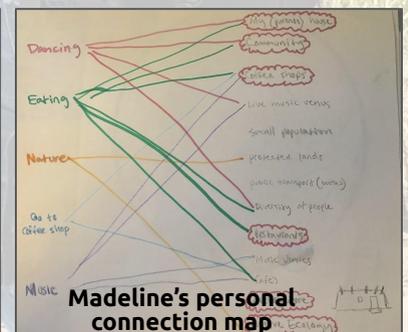
On the Other Side of Light Lies the Night

Project 2: Wild Invaders

Stewardship – One Plant at a Time



Mimi's star map



Session 3: June 22nd - July 10th

Project 1: Stars & Stories

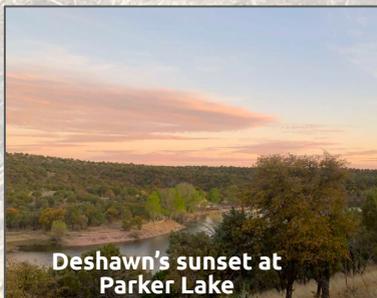
Explore the Tales of the Celestial Sphere

Project 2: Borderland Dispatches

Inclusion in Interpretation



Quinn's picture of a Yellow-legged mud dauber



Deshawn's sunset at Parker Lake

Session 4: July 20th - August 7th

Project: WorldWildWeb Scavenger Hunt

Discover the Biodiversity of the Borderlands

Community Experts & Partners

The ITE World**Wild**Web was reinforced with great support from our **partners & experts** who engaged with our youth on so many different topics. **Thank you** to all those who joined us for fun, engaging, and educational **Zoom** virtual sessions!

Christopher Bentley

Interpretation Program Manager, **Anza Trail, NPS**

Rebecca Flores

Latino Heritage Internship Program, **Anza Trail, NPS**

Madison Birchard, Yada Leal, Matvey Cronyn

Youth Field Specialists, **ITE EcoMonitoring Corps**

Charles Clark

Deputy District Ranger, Santa Catalina District
Coronado National Forest, USFS

Isolde Edminster-Genet, Dot Pallanes, Terra Gomez, Andrea Casas

Youth Project Specialists,
ITE Community Action Toolkit Program

Diego Huerta

ITE alumnus, **ITE Board of Director**,
& Environmental Science graduate, **UA**

Julia Rowe

Invasive Species Research Specialist,
Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum

Sarah Studd

Ecologist (Vegetation),
Sonoran Desert Network, NPS

Jim Knoll

School/Non-Profit Star Party Manager,
Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association

Jennie Duberstein

Coordinator, **Sonoran Joint Venture**

Youth Testimonials

"Nature has allowed me to feel grounded and relaxed during this time. Despite all the chaos and cancellations in the world brought on by the pandemic, there is no canceling springtime! Watching all the birds, bunnies, plants, and lizards thrive in the desert sun gives me hope for a change and growth in our civilization."

-Clarissa Savel



"This Scavenger hunt was a chance for adventure. I explored Fort Collins, learning about its culture, its animals, and its plant life. I went on many outdoor adventures that I wouldn't have normally, I met people I typically wouldn't have crossed paths with, and I even got iNaturalist to continue my exploration."

-Quinn Weltzin



"I love ITE and I wanted to remain engaged with the natural world while I was staying home... [My favorite part was] the zoom meetings. It was nice to have that social interaction and to continue thinking about and discussing nature with friends."

-Isolde Edminster-Genet

THANK YOU, to our **funders and partners** who are instrumental in keeping together our **Youth Action Corps** members:

- The **Dustin and Kristen Yoder Memorial Foundation** for ensuring we have funds for youth scholarships.
 - The **Stonewall Foundation** for their generous operational and program support.
- The **Sonoran Joint Venture** and **US Fish & Wildlife Service** for their continued support of youth birding and bird studies. • The **US Forest Service, Coronado National Forest** for their dedication to Connecting Youth Outdoors in public lands. • The **Sonoran Desert Network, National Park Foundation, & National Park Service** for their unwavering support of youth citizen science, and • **The Kids International Neighborhood** for their commitment to urban ecomonitoring on the GreenLot and beyond!

Outside of the World**Wild**Web projects, youth had the opportunity to **engage** with each other through **Youth Action Corps** (YAC) **virtual workshops & forums** and complete YAC **activities**.

YAC Virtual & Socially-Distant Activities

May 22nd

Introduction to
"Passport Series: Wild America" with
The Wilderness Society

June 12th

Youth Forum on Equity & Equality.
Co-Hosted by ITE Youth Leaders,
Dot Pallanes & Isaiah Haley

July 17th

Youth Forum on Race, Equity, & Inclusion:
Defining Intersectional Environmentalism.
Co-Hosted by ITE Youth Leaders,
Dot Pallanes & Isaiah Haley

August 14th

World**Wild**Web End of Summer,
Socially-Distant Celebration at Reid Park

YOUTH FORUM

EQUITY & EQUALITY

Led by youth for youth

YOUTH FORUM

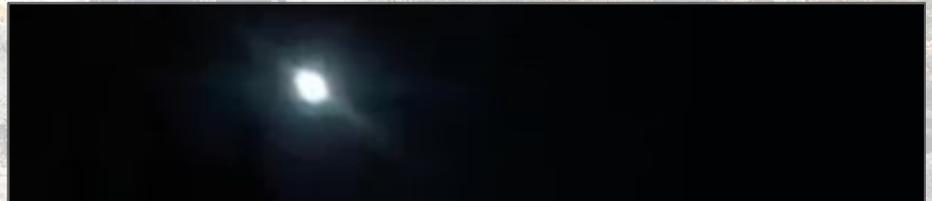
**RACE, JUSTICE,
& THE ENVIRONMENT:**

Defining Intersectional Environmentalism



Youth Reflections on Public Lands

"These photos and videos are **memories** of the backpacking trip we took to **Hutch's Pool (in the Santa Catalina Mountains, Coronado National Forest)**. Me and Will were so sunburned by the end lol. In the video you could see how bright this **full moon** was, possibly a factor for the dozens of **canyon [tree] frogs** surrounding our camp at all times!" - **Dot, ITE Youth Participant**



With friends from The Wilderness Society, ITE youth went on wild **adventures** across the United States from Alaska to Appalachia, albeit virtually, but exciting nonetheless! Every few weeks, youth and TWS conservation experts together explored the biologically and culturally-rich regions and learned more about the Indigenous People, flora, fauna, and current environmental efforts.

Passport Series: Wild America with The Wilderness Society

Passport to Alaska

June 5th - **Tim Fullman**, Senior Ecologist

Passport to Montana

June 26th - **Anne Carlson**, Senior Climate Adaptation Specialist

Passport to Maine

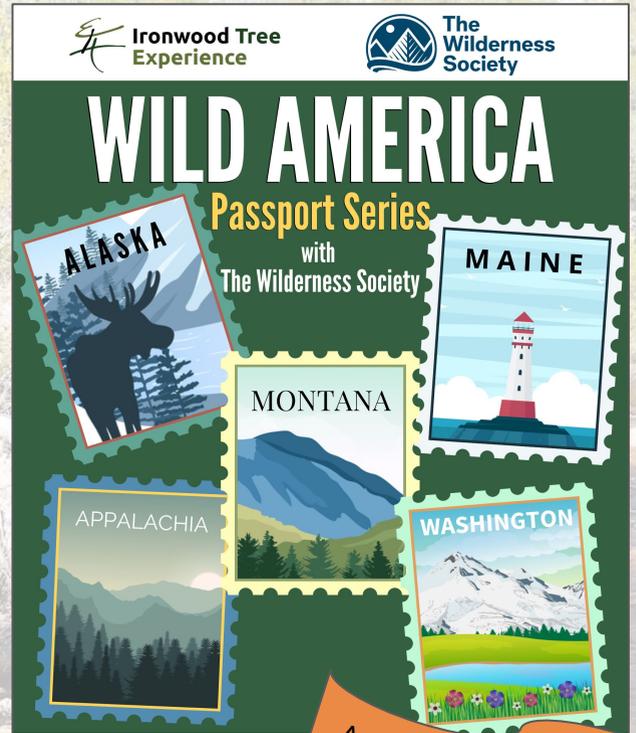
July 17th - **Pete McKinley**, Lead Ecologist

Passport to Appalachia

August 7th - **Hugh Irwin**, Landscape Conservation Planner

Passport to Washington

September 10th - **Kitty Craig**, Deputy Washington State Director



A special **thank you** to **Mike Quigley** for making this all happen!

ITE/TWS meet online



Guess which region each picture is from!



Appalachia



Maine



Washington



Washington



Appalachia

Lessons Learned & Moving Forward

Adapting to **online-only programs** presented **challenges** for us as an outdoor organization with a close-knit team. As a group of people that is accustomed to spending time in nature with enthusiastic teenagers and passionate donors, teachers, and partners, engaging in the World**Wild**Web was a whole **new experience** with many **lessons learned**. Nonetheless, our programs remained robust, and the experience has **helped** us shape our programs **moving forward** through the pandemic.

Lessons Learned

Programs: Our team was proud of the design of the projects and the use of online team tools like Trello, Zoom, and 'do-it-yourself' activities in the outdoors to provide quality programs for youth. Providing the opportunity to meet on Zoom and discuss what was learned and experienced through each project was a great way to stay connected in a time when we could not meet in-person. Additionally, we were lucky to have so much support from **partners** that were willing to engage online and connect with our youth on a wide variety of topics.

Youth Engagement: The format of World**Wild**Web programs also brought on a new level of engagement with partners and **youth**. Our team conducted outreach to youth through email, text message, and phone call, making the connection more frequent and personal, ensuring that youth were aware of each opportunity available to them through our programs.

Community Engagement:

With all that we have experienced and learned this past year, and with a renewed commitment to engage youth with their community through sustainable recreation and environmental stewardship, the ITE team will move forward into 2021 with a greater sense of:

- understanding and determination for diversity, equity, and inclusion in all facets of our organization;
- compassion, authenticity, and safety when working with and engaging youth;
- flexibility and creativity when designing and facilitating youth programs online, hybrid-style, and in-person;
- curiosity and focus on our urban community (home, neighborhood, city) and local environment and people (culture, history);
- urgency to mobilize young people for environmental, social, and climate justice; and
- partnership in our efforts to connect youth with their community through equitable opportunities for sustainable recreation and environmental stewardship.